



CENTER FOR  
TOBACCO  
PRODUCTS

## Issue Snapshot: Public Education Campaigns



Achieving FDA's mission to reduce the enormous public health burden of tobacco use requires a comprehensive, innovative approach. As part of this approach, FDA's Center for Tobacco Products (CTP) is investing in a number of public education campaigns that are grounded in science and directly support our mission.

### **Educating the Public, Especially Youth**

Although the number of people who use tobacco has decreased over the past several decades, every day in the United States more than 2,600 youth under age 18 smoke their first cigarette and nearly 600 youth under age 18 become daily smokers. There's still more work to be done to make tobacco use a part of America's past—not its future.

To that end, one of our priorities is to educate the public, especially youth, about the harms of tobacco use. Our first national public education campaign, "The Real Cost," launched in 2014. It targets at-risk youth aged 12 to 17 in the general public who are open to smoking or already experimenting with cigarettes. In 2016, we plan to expand "The Real Cost" to include rural youth at risk of smokeless tobacco use.

FDA's second youth tobacco prevention campaign, "Fresh Empire," launched in 2015 and is designed to prevent and reduce tobacco use among at-risk multicultural youth aged 12 to 17, including African American, Hispanic, and Asian American/Pacific Islander youth. The campaign specifically targets youth who identify with the hip-hop peer crowd—an innovative and promising segmentation approach that focuses on youth who share the same core ideals, have similar life experiences and common interests, and may be at higher risk for tobacco use.

FDA is also developing additional campaigns targeting other audiences, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender young adults, and American Indian/Alaska Native youth. The campaigns will use carefully crafted messages and communications tactics most appropriate for each target audience.

## Using an Evidence-based Approach

Our public education campaigns are based on a robust body of evidence that supports the use of mass media campaigns to prevent and reduce tobacco use. As part of our evidence-based approach, FDA conducts multiple rounds of research to develop effective strategies and messaging to reach our target audiences. These strategies include:

- Message development, including extensive literature reviews, early research to identify salient messages, and consultation with experts in tobacco public health education, marketing, and communication science.
- Concept development, including conducting focus groups with target audience members to identify promising creative concepts and consulting with experts.
- Copy testing TV ads with members of our target audience to measure perceived effectiveness, level of engagement, and message comprehension.

## Measuring Results

Each campaign will be evaluated to measure its effectiveness in changing relevant tobacco-related knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, or behaviors among the target audience. This important information will help us refine future education campaigns and other efforts.

## Creating a Brighter Future

Our innovative public education campaigns aim to free this generation and future ones from lifetimes of tobacco addiction and disease. We hope that through a combination of our efforts, thousands of young lives will be saved.

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“We have a responsibility . . . to reduce the death and disease toll from tobacco use. That includes educating kids about the harms of tobacco use in an effective way, in a way that will reach them.”

—Mitch Zeller, CTP Director

For more information about our campaigns to prevent and reduce tobacco use—and how to get involved—visit [FDA.gov/tobaccocampaigns](https://www.fda.gov/tobaccocampaigns).

### Contact Us

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